

Putting the Little Red Schoolhouse Into the Constitution

By HARRY H. DUNN

FOR nearly 150 years, the "little red schoolhouse" has been the national building of the United States. Out of it have come patriots and presidents, bankers and bank-wreckers, chorus girls and stars, suffragettes and antis, and all the rest of all the varieties of American manhood and womanhood that make life worth living for us ordinary folk—most of us also having come from the same I. r. s., these being the only letters we are entitled to wear behind our names. Up to date we have been content to allow legislatures, county supervisors and town aldermen, by and with the advice and consent of the well-known school board, to attend to the education of our young ideas. Hitherto, this system has proved so efficient that our public schools are the admiration of the remainder of the civilized world, as well as the hope of our own future as a people and as a nation—two vastly different futures, by the way.

But one state has decided to go a step further than this, and to make the educational system of the state a part of the organic law, in order to take the whole school organization out of politics; to distribute the funds appropriated for educational purposes more equably, and to centralize authority and methods, to a certain extent, in one state-wide organization. The state is Louisiana, whose new constitution, when it is completed, bids fair to be as long as both the two under which it is now operating, and the sixty or more amendments to these organic laws. In spite of its length, however, and the 143 men and three women thought necessary to write it at Baton Rouge, several pages will be taken up with the public school system, with explicit directions as to its organization and operation. While this seems to be legislation, rather than the customary direction for legislation, such as usually written into state constitutions, it has met with the approval of virtually all the educators of the state, and was prepared by a special educational committee, composed of those delegates to the state constitutional convention most closely connected with the educational work of the state.

In brief, the educational article of the new constitution of Louisiana provides for the co-ordination and unification of the public school system of the state, commencing with a state board of education, partially elective and partially appointive by the governor, and running on down to the district school boards in the various parishes. While this new school system will be apart from the bodies which will direct Louisiana State University and the large state agricultural college, for which provision has been made in the new constitution, it will be closely connected with these boards, and will work with them, to the end that a greater number of graduates of the public grammar schools, high schools and junior high schools—when these last-named are established—continue their education either in the state university or through the specialized courses of the agricultural college.

Supervisory powers over private schools, operating on a grade basis, are given to the state board of education in furthering the general plan of co-ordination and unification of the entire educational advantages and opportunities offered by the state. These private schools, both secular and otherwise, seem to have accepted the new plan and to have approved its incorporation into the organic law, to be a permanent arrangement, rather than one which can be altered each year by the state legislature. Discussing the new and untried plan of "constitutional education," Wilbur J. Black, a delegate to the constitutional convention from New Iberia, and chairman of the educational committee which drafted the educational article for the constitution, said:

"The committee on public education has presented a schedule which purports to unify and co-ordinate the entire educational system of the state, beginning with the first-grade pupil and ending with the finished product of the state university, meanwhile taking the entire system out of politics.

"To these ends, the new article of the constitution co-ordinates the various elements of the educational system under the general supervision of a state board of education, but at the same time seeks to evade and avoid too great centralization of authority even in that board. Beginning with the Louisiana State University, the supervision of this state board over this, the highest of our state educational institutions, is merely general, the close direction of the destinies of the university being placed in the hands of an administrative board.

"The superintendence of the secondary educational institutions of the state—of which there are eight, headed by the state normal school—is, however, placed directly in the hands of the new state board of education. This is accomplished by vesting in the board the power to appoint the governing bodies of these institutions, and to allocate to each the proportion of the gross fund given by the state for their maintenance. Each of these institutions has been conducted—of necessity—as though it were a separate institution, and not a part of the educational system of the whole state. Through this condition, each was brought, biennially, in bitter competition with other member schools of the secondary system in a scramble for needed legislative financial appropriations. Under the new system all will be brought together in co-ordinated work under the administrative charge of special boards, but with all these boards under direct supervision of centralized authority, and with proper and just division of all available funds to each.

"While it was deemed essential to approach centralization of authority with reference to the higher institutions mentioned, there is a recession in regard to

parish (that is, county) school boards. If the state superintendent of education, or the state board of education, had the authority to dominate the parish school boards and superintendents, he, or it, would have the power to move an army, political or otherwise, composed of hundreds of officials and thousands of teachers, each dependent upon the central authority for his or her very livelihood. To make certain that no such condition might ever arise, the state board of education was given supervision over the purely educational features, methods of study, gradings, books used, and so on, but never to be vested with control of the administrative or financial affairs of the parish board or its personnel.

"The first steps in the progress of the present educational system of the state were slow, because there were not always available men qualified to lead in local educational work. Parish superintendents were appointed without regard to qualifications, and boards had as great political as educational qualifications. The first exercise of a centralized authority over parish boards, however, enabled the administration of Governor Blanchard later on to force the raising of the standards of parish superintendents and of the personnel of the parish boards. Wherever reluctance to advance appeared, the reluctant ones were removed. This was a beneficent use of centralized power and has resulted in placing the educational system on a higher plane than ever before in Louisiana. This exercise of power for good, however, also warns that it may be equally powerful for bad, and we believe it is safer to let control of the local schools rest in local hands, subject to the supervision of the educational features by the state board of education.

"Under the new article in the constitution, the state board of education is to be composed of one member elected from each of the eleven congressional districts, for overlapping terms of eight years, one to be elected every two years—with three additional members to be appointed by the governor of the state. The purpose is to obtain for the board not only men trained in general educational matters, but men familiar with local educational conditions in all parts of the state as well. This board will be responsible for its acts to the governor, and to the people—at the elections—and will prevent the state board of education ever becoming a machine in the hands of any governor."

The Pro-Truth Campaign

IN AN article published in this journal, April 30, 1921, Professor Arvid Reuter Dahl presented definite evidence proving the similarity between the work of the unknown scientist "Kinertia" and the much-advertised Einsteinian Theory of Relativity. The similarity is so pronounced that any fair-minded person at once must wonder if the alleged contributions of Dr. Einstein rest upon borrowed foundations. It is a fact that "Kinertia's" work antedates that of Einstein. It is difficult to prove a direct charge of plagiarism. This is particularly true whenever the person involved is surrounded by a veritable host of protectors who refuse to permit an honest investigation.

Professor Reuter Dahl's reply to his critics follows in part:

In the case of "Kinertia" Versus Einstein the present writer did not state that Einstein is a plagiarist. To make such a bald statement one must have indisputable proofs. I did state and again repeat the statement: "If Einstein was aware of 'Kinertia's' discovery then the appellation 'plagiarist,' bestowed upon him by his German professional colleagues, is eminently fitting. If, on the contrary, Einstein was unaware of this work, then he is, nevertheless, antedated by the work of 'Kinertia.' Einstein is at liberty to choose either horn of the dilemma."

Referring to an editorial criticism in the *Scientific American* of May 14, Professor Reuter Dahl continues: "The *Scientific American* is particularly disturbed by my article entitled 'Kinertia' Versus Einstein." On the cover of this issue the following question appeared in bold type "Is Einstein a Plagiarist?" In reference to this question the *Scientific American* states: "It will be at once understood that according to Professor Reuter Dahl he is." What I actually stated in my article has been again recorded above in order to refresh the memory of the editorial writer. After this perversion of truth a subtle atmosphere is created in order to link, by contrastive suggestion, both the present writer and THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT with the ambitions of the former Kaiser of Germany. A diversion is thereby adroitly produced which removes the reader's attention from the actual question in hand, that is, "Kinertia' Versus Einstein," to an entirely different issue. Moreover, another irrelevant issue is deftly imposed, that is, anti-Semitism.

The present writer emphatically denies and resents both insinuations created in this questionable manner. I am a loyal citizen of the United States. I was born in Sweden. I came to the United States when I was six and a half years of age. Furthermore, the allegation, also by innuendo, that my attack upon the theories of Einstein are due to anti-Semitic feeling, I brand as a gross misrepresentation.

The *Scientific American* editorial then becomes a plea for Professor Einstein's mathematical product. There seems to be urgent need to show that although Einstein has benefited by "ideas which have had a rather nebulous existence before him" nevertheless in the hands of this master craftsman they have been mathematically welded into a "crowning achievement" which "has never been approached or approximated in any way."

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that we grant that this concession in no way affects the real issue which we may state in the form of a question: Has Einstein given proper credit to the creators of the "nebulous ideas" which he used in constructing this supreme masterpiece of the human intellect? We are not aware that he has ever referred to their humble contributions to his stupendous structure. It seems that he has ruthlessly discarded the scaffolding which he used in building his edifice without paying for its use. Do we find the name of Dr. J. H. Ziegler mentioned in any of his writings? Is there any reference to the contributions of "Kinertia"? Has he ever answered the charges made by Engineer Rudolph Mewes. Professors E. Gehrke and Paul Weyland that he appropriated a formula which appeared in a work published by the late Professor Gerber in the year, 1898? If perchance Professor Einstein should plead ignorance of these contributions at the time when he developed his mathematical analysis, then we demand that he publicly admit their previous existence and definite worth. It remains to be seen if Dr. Einstein will even condescend to comply with this eminently just demand. We trust that we may be permitted to state that what we have granted in the above, for the sake of argument, we do not admit as an actual fact. The writer is prepared to show that Einsteinism is a pernicious fallacy.

The climax of the extraordinary editorial is in keeping with the intent of the entire outburst. Vereschagin, the great Russian painter, could not have depicted the closing scene with more telling finesse and skill. In the foreground of the picture we see the vultures flying about picking the Einsteinian bones. These carrion birds are the "small fry" of science "whose names will be forgotten fifty years from now." In the background we see the Golden Sun of Relativity rising above the horizon and casting its brilliant rays over this field of iniquity.

We trust that if we presume to draw another picture descriptive of conditions five years from now, we will not be charged with undue lack of scientific piety.

In the foreground of our canvas we see the black ocean of Relativistic Despair stretching gloomily to the abyss-like boundaries of finite but unlimited space. In the background behold the lurid setting Sun of Einsteinism disappearing below the horizon, and casting gruesome shadows over the Island of Ignorance and the Ruins of Relativity while the somber mourners, Inconsistency, Chaos, and Skepticism, simultaneously and yet separately await the approach of Eternal Night.



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The beautiful heroic statue to Simon Bolivar, the South American Liberator, recently unveiled in Central Park, New York. The statue was presented to the United States by Venezuela and was accepted by President Harding in the name of the nation. The President considered the event of such great importance that he attended the unveiling in person and delivered a long address. The statue is the work of an American woman, Sally J. Farnham, and is the largest sculpture in the world executed by a woman. Artists have pronounced it to be exceptionally fine. It cost \$55,000.